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NCTQ RELEASES NEWEST TEACHER PREP RATINGS IDENTIFYING TOP PROGRAMS PREPARING HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

Idaho Boasts Three Programs Rated in Top Third Nationally, with Northwest Nazarene University Scoring in Top Ten Percent

Washington DC –Today, the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) releases its latest ratings for 717 undergraduate programs that prepare high school teachers, including three in Idaho.

Of the 16 programs nationally to be named to NCTQ’s “National Top Tier Secondary Teacher Prep Program” list, none are located in Idaho. Neighboring Utah does have a “Top Tier” program--the University of Utah (Salt Lake City).

Programs achieve “Top Tier” status because they have solid admission standards, provide sufficient preparation in each candidate’s intended subject area, and show them how best to teach that subject. Many also do well in evaluating candidates on how to manage a classroom and providing and ensuring the high quality of practice opportunities.

Teacher Prep Programs in Idaho

Programs in Idaho do relatively well; although not earning “Top Tier” status, one ranks in the top 10 percent nationally, while two others rank in the top third nationally:

Northwest Nazarene University (94th Percentile)

Lewis-Clark State College (76th Percentile)

Brigham Young University – Idaho (71st Percentile)

Key Findings: As for overall performance of the 700+ programs, a common problem that surfaced in the analysis is the weak content preparation provided to science and social studies teacher candidates. That weakness contrasts sharply with almost uniformly strong preparation in English and mathematics content in the same institutions. A sizeable portion of programs (43 percent across the country) struggle to prepare teachers who will be qualified to teach the subjects under the umbrella of either science or social studies. For example, even though history is the subject most teachers with general social studies certification will be asked to teach, one out of five programs requires minimal to no history courses of their candidates. Through a combination of licensing test and coursework requirements, all three programs in Idaho earn an A for content preparation in both the sciences and social studies.

To see how programs in each state perform on their coverage of science go [here](#), and for social studies go [here](#).

Only 42 percent of programs succeed at teaching future teachers both the content and teaching methods for their subject. For a list of these programs in each state, go [here](#).

Other Findings:

- A quarter of all programs do not require a course in the best ways to teach a specific subject. In Idaho, Brigham Young University-Idaho and Lewis-Clark State College each require teacher candidates to take a methods course in the subject area they will be certified to teach.
- There are early signs of some programs becoming more selective in their admissions, but it is still the case that 44 percent of programs set the bar too low for who gets into their programs. Northwest Nazarene University sets the bar high for admission, drawing most of its students from the top half of the college-going population. For a list of programs' selectivity rank in each state go [here](#).
- Among sufficiently selective programs, half also meet diversity goals, although none in Idaho. For a list of selective and diverse programs in each state, go [here](#).
- Only 6 percent of programs pay sufficient attention to the quality of student teaching by establishing an expectation that only skilled teachers should be allowed to mentor a future teacher and requiring student teachers to be regularly observed by program staff. Unfortunately, no program in Idaho does well in this area. For a list of strong student teaching programs in each state go [here](#).
- Fewer than half of all programs (44 percent) evaluate teacher candidates on their use of the most effective strategies for managing classrooms while student teaching. In Idaho, two of the three evaluated programs evaluate future teachers in most or all of these strategies. For a list of programs in each state that do well on classroom management, go [here](#).

Recommendations: Based on this research, NCTQ recommends that states make sure that high school teachers have a deep understanding of the content they will teach students, a goal that can be met by better licensing tests. Most states, including Idaho, are overdue for revamping their licensing tests, as most allow a high score in one subject to compensate for a low score in another. For instance, Idaho has inadequate licensing tests for Natural Science, Physical Science, and Social Studies certification. Currently, only Arizona, Minnesota, and Missouri have strong tests in all core subject areas.

NCTQ also calls on programs to raise subject content requirements to require a solid education in *all* the subjects the future teacher will be licensed to teach, even in the broad categories of science and social studies. For more on what programs do to successfully ensure the preparation of all candidates in science, go [here](#), and for social studies, go [here](#).

This edition of the *Teacher Prep Review* analyzes undergraduate programs preparing secondary school teachers. The next set of ratings from NCTQ will appear in Fall 2017 and will cover graduate and alternative (or nontraditional) programs preparing elementary teachers. The ratings for graduate and nontraditional secondary programs will follow in Spring 2018, followed by undergraduate and graduate special education programs in Fall 2018.

To read the *Landscape* report, click [here](#). To schedule an interview with NCTQ President Kate Walsh, please contact Stephen Buckley at (202) 393-0020 ext. 129.

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About the National Council on Teacher Quality:

The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) is a nonpartisan research and policy group, committed to modernizing the teaching profession and based on the belief that all children deserve effective teachers. NCTQ is the nation's expert on the quality of teacher preparation programs and evaluates national teacher education against evidence-based criteria. More information about NCTQ can be found on our website, www.nctq.org